

Eating Well for Gut Health

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE REGISTERED DIETITIAN AT
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Gut health has become an increasingly popular topic in recent years. Along with this topic usually comes with confusing terms such as microbiome, prebiotics, probiotics and so on. Read on to learn more about what these terms mean and how they affect our gut health.

Gut health is building increasing interest in recent years for several reasons. In Canada, more than 20 million people suffer from digestive conditions each year. That's 51% of our population! Aside from the obvious digestive disorders, gut health has also been linked to many other aspects of our overall health including our immune system, mental health and chronic diseases. So for many people, paying attention to gut health will offer health benefits one way or another.

Our digestive tract is home to 70% of our body's immune cells and trillions of microscopic living organisms. With increasing research, we are learning that they are the key players in influencing our health through the gut.

The microbiome describes the collection of these microscopic organisms in our gut, including bacteria and yeast. Everyone's microbiome is unique, and influenced by many factors such as food choices, living environment, medications, and stress. With that said, it is possible to alter our microbiome and improve our gut health by looking at our choices in some of these areas.



Here is how your food choices and lifestyle can help improve gut health:

1. Eat a variety of plant-based foods including high fibre fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains to promote the growth of healthy gut bacteria.
2. Limit highly processed foods with lots of sugars and fats, such as sugary drinks, sweets, and pastries. These foods promote unhealthy bacteria in the gut.
3. Include probiotics - these are foods or supplements that contain healthy bacteria for the gut. Fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, kefir and probiotic yogurt are good sources.
4. Include prebiotics - these are food sources or supplements that contain non-digestible carbohydrates that act as food for probiotics and bacteria in our gut. Food sources include asparagus, bananas, garlic, leeks, onion, whole grains, and chicory root.
5. Other lifestyle factors - get enough sleep, stay active and find healthy ways to help manage stress!



Spiced Parsnip Soup with Smoked Paprika Almonds

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp Olive oil
- 1 Onion, chopped
- 1 tsp Ginger, minced
- 2 cloves Garlic, minced
- 1 tsp Ground Cumin
- 2 tsp Ground Turmeric
- 1/2 tsp Ground Coriander
- 1/4 tsp Ground Cinnamon
- 1lb Parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 2 Carrots, peeled and chopped
- 4 cups Vegetable Broth, no salt added
- 1/4 tsp Salt and pepper

Smoked Paprika Almonds

- 1 tbsp Olive oil
- 1 cup Whole raw almonds, roughly chopped
- 1/2 tsp Smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp Salt

Directions:

1. Smoked paprika almonds: In a skillet, heat oil over medium low heat. Add almonds, paprika and salt. Stir and pan roast for about 3 minutes or until fragrant and toasted. Set aside to cool.
2. In a soup pot, heat oil over medium heat. Cook onion, ginger and garlic for 3 minutes or stir until softened. Stir in cumin, turmeric, coriander, and cinnamon.
3. Add parsnips, carrots and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil; cover and simmer for about 25 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Using an immersion blender, puree soup until smooth. Stir in salt and pepper.
4. Ladle soup into bowls. Garnish with almonds to serve.

Sources:

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- (7) Photo (on page 2) by Nataliya Vaitkevich: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/white-ceramic-bowl-with-soup-5605576/>
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